

Marching to the beat of their own drum

BY AMY RIETH

BAND SUCCEEDS IN STATE COMPETITIONS, PLAYS CROSS-COUNTRY GIG, AND HOLDS FUNDRAISERS

Aside from performing every Friday at football games, the marching band has also found success in recent competitions.

On Oct. 20, they placed 7th in the Upper State contest at Boiling Springs. Upper State features the 4A bands from across the upper half of South Carolina. The top eight teams from Upper and Lower State move on to compete in the State finals. This year was the first year since 2014 that the band attended the finals.

Band director John McAllister enjoyed being able to compete at this level.

"It was an incredible experience," McAllister said. "We got to stand among the best bands in the state."

The marching band theme for this year was "Eureka!" This subject focused on the process of

turning an epiphanic idea into an actual invention. Through their performance, the marching group hoped to convey the feelings of joy, curiosity, and even frustration that come with creation.

To prepare for the State competition, band members practiced every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 4 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. At these rehearsals, the players refined their coordination and precision in small groups. These groups were based on the instrumental groups, such as the hornline, percussion, and color guard. Through this method, the various components of the



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Instructors for the group include band director John McAllister, assistant directors Jeff Key and Sharon Atherton, visual director Ryan Davis, percussion director Matt McDaniel, and guard instructors Pam Gordett and Kirsten Horvath.

Drum Major Damya Gregory (12) has been a member of the band for her entire high school career. She was proud of the group's successes and has faith in the next generation of band kids.

"Going to state for my second time in the 5 years that I have participated in Marching Band was an amazing feeling," Gregory said. "The students that we have now from seventh grade to 12th grade are an amazing group of students and they work hard."

The Viking marching band placed 12th at State. Moving forward, ideas are already being made for the next marching

season. These plans will be announced in May 2019.

The band also took a trip to Washington, D.C. on Nov. 9-12. They performed in the Parade of Heroes and at the Air Force Memorial. The young musicians also visited the Capitol building and various Smithsonian museums.

Caroline Shaw (9) was moved by the effect their play-

Washington D.C. was the destination of the most recent band trip. The players took part in the Parade of Heroes.

in the Christmas parade on Dec. 11 and will be hosting a "Cookies and Carols" fundraiser in the band room on Dec. 14. The band room will be transformed into a holiday festival for this

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ing had on the veterans.

"Our trip to Washington, DC, was memorable not only for us but also for the lives we touched with our music," Shaw said. "Looking into the eyes of veterans as we played was magical. Men who have lost everything in war began to smile."

Band members will also play

event and it will feature holiday-themed games and treats. Tickets are \$5 and they cover admission as well as two treats.

McAllister is excited for the upcoming events and reflects on the impact of the state win.

"We've set a new standard for ourselves and we'll continue to build on that," McAllister said. □

School-spirited band member Avery Transiskus (11) performs at the Homecoming game.



PHOTO BY E. PANCE

m a r c h i n g band were refined and then put back together again.